

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 EB-08 COME-00 TRSE-00 AGRE-00

OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01

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FM AMCONSUL SURABAYA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1147

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMCONSUL MEDAN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, SOCI, ID

SUBJECT: FOOD PROBLEMS IN THE SURABAYA CONSULAR DISTRICT

1. SUMMARY: AS OCCURRED THIS TIME LAST YEAR, FREQUENT PRESS REPORTS ARE APPEARING OF FOOD SHORTAGES IN THE CONSULAR DISTRICT, PARTICULARLY IN YOGYAKARTA, CENTRAL JAVA, THE WESTERN PART OF EAST JAVA, AND LOMBOK. THERE ALSO HAS APPEARED SOME DEBATE ABOUT WHO OR WHAT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FOOD SHORTAGES. OFFICIALS IN EAST JAVA ARE CONVINCED THEY WILL BE ABLE TO MANAGE FOOD PROBLEMS HERE, WHILE FEWER RESOURCES MAY BE AVAILABLE IN LOMBOK, CENTRAL JAVA, AND YOGYAKARTA. THE CAUSES OF CURRENT FOOD DIFFICULTIES ARE A COMBINATION OF NATURAL MISFORTUNES -- LACK OF RAIN FALL, PESTS, AND FAILED HARVESTS -- AND MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS ABOUT WHICH METHODS TO USE IN SUPPLYING RICE TO THE PEOPLE WHO NEED IT. IN EAST JAVA, THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS HAS PRODUCED CAPITAL INTENSIVE INDUSTRIES WHICH DO NOT REACH THE PROBLEMS OF RURAL POVERTY. IN ADDITION IRRIGATION MANAGEMENT AND LAND USE PRIORITIES HAVE NOT SUCCEEDED IN EFFECTIVELY CONSERVING AVAILABLE WATER AND GETTING

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IT TO THE AREAS THAT NEED IT MOST.

END SUMMARY

2. LAST YEAR AT THIS TIME, THERE APPEARED FREQUENT REPORTS OF FAMINE AND STARVATION IN THE CONSULAR DISTRICT GROWING FROM WIDE-SPREAD DROUGHT AND FAILED HARVESTS. AGAIN THIS YEAR, THE LOCAL AND NATIONAL PRESS IS PRODUCING

STORIES OF A SIMILAR NATURE. THE CRITICAL PERIOD OF THE YEAR FOR RICE FARMERS IN THIS AREA IS NOVEMBER THROUGH MARCH, WHEN THE YEAR'S SECOND HARVEST SHOULD SUPPLY FOOD NEEDS THROUGH DECEMBER, JANUARY AND FEBRUARY UNTIL THE SPRING HARVEST. IF THE DRY SEASON HAS BEEN ESPECIALLY LONG, THE NOVEMBER HARVEST WILL MOST LIKELY FAIL, AND IF THAT HAPPENS THERE OCCURS A SHORT-FALL OF AVAILABLE FOOD IN THE MORE REMOTE AND POOR SECTIONS OF THE REGION. THIS PATTERN OF SHORTAGE OCCURRED IN 1966, 1972, 1976, AND APPARENTLY IT IS HAPPENING AGAIN NOW.

3. SPECIFICALLY IN EAST JAVA, THE PRESS HAS REPORTED

A) -- IN VILLAGES IN THE SURABAYA AREA, A PROGRAM COMBINING 10-DAYS FREE DISTRIBUTION OF RICE IN SOME AREAS, PRICE STABILIZATION ACTIVITIES IN RURAL MARKETS BY THE RICE DISTRIBUTION AGENCY (DOLOG), AND "EMERGENCY" PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS (PADAT KARYA) HAS BEEN UNDERTAKEN TO ALLEVIATE BEGINNING SIGNS OF MALNUTRITION ATTRIBUTED TO "LACK OF PURCHASING POWER." AS RELATED IN TEMPO MAGAZINE RECENTLY, A FAILED HARVEST HAS A DOMINO EFFECT IN THE RURAL AREAS AFFECTING EVERYONE FROM THE LANDLORD TO THE LANDLESS DAY-LABORER TO THE FOOD-STALL VENDOR AND THE BECAK DRIVER, WHO IS USED AS A MEANS OF TRANSPORT DURING THE HARVESTING AND MILLING SEASON. IF A HARVEST FAILS ALL THESE RURAL SECTORS ARE AFFECTED. BECAUSE OF THE DIFFICULTIES IN THE VILLAGES, REPORTS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED OF AN INCREASE OF AS MANY AS 6,000 NEW HOMELESS PEOPLE FROM VILLAGES WANDERING THE STREETS OF SURABAYA LOOKING FOR WORK AND "PURCHASING POWER."

B) -- AREAS OF THE CENTRAL PART OF EAST JAVA, IN MOJOKERTO AND LAMONGAN KABUPATEN, PARTICULARLY AREAS NORTH OF THE BRANTAS RIVER, HAVE BEEN ESPECIALLY AFFECTED BY LACK OF RAIN. IN MOJOKERTO, THE BUPATI HAS DISTRIBUTED 30 TONS OF FREE CASSAVA TO VILLAGERS.

C) -- IN SITUBONDO, THE BUPATI HAS INITIATED RP. 70 MILLION WORTH OF PUBLIC PROJECTS TO GIVE VILLAGERS MONEY TO BUY FOOD.

D) -- IN PROBOLINGGO AND PASURUAN, EACH KABUPATEN HAS RECEIVED 50 TONS (OUT OF A TOTAL OF 2,000 TONS FOR EAST JAVA) OF PRESIDENTIAL RICE AID. PRESIDENTIAL RICE AID IS TO BE DISTRIBUTED TO A TOTAL OF 1,384 VILLAGES. PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS HAVE BEEN EXPANDED TO 120 VILLAGES TO PROVIDE PURCHASING POWER. IN ADDITION THE DOLOG CHIEF FOR EAST JAVA HAS DESIGNATED WESTERN AND SOUTHERN RIM AREAS AS CRITICAL SHORTAGE REGIONS, INCLUDING PACITAN, BOJONEGORO, TULUNGAGUNG, TRENGGALEK, NGAWI, SOUTH BLITAR AND SOUTH MALANG.

4. IN CENTRAL JAVA, PRESS REPORTS SAY

A) -- THE CENTRAL JAVA SOCIAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT HAS ESTIMATED THAT THERE ARE 230,000 UNDERNOURISHED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN AT THE PRESENT TIME.  
B) -- TO KEEP RICE PRICES STABLE AND KEEP SUPPLIES FLOWING, THE CENTRAL JAVA DOLOG HAS BEEN RELEASING 800 TONS OF RICE A DAY IN SEMARANG FROM ITS STOCKPILES.  
C) -- AS A RESULT OF THE DROUGHT 16 CENTRAL JAVA KABUPATENS ARE RECEIVING PUBLIC WORK PROJECTS.  
D) -- OTHER AREAS RECEIVING FOOD ASSISTANCE FREE OF CHARGE AND PUBLIC WORKS FUNDS ARE BANYUMAS, AND REMBANG.  
E) -- THE BUPATI OF SRAGEN HAS REQUESTED 2,275 TONS OF RICE BE DISTRIBUTED FREE OF CHARGE TO VILLAGERS.  
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5. YOGYAKARTA:

IN THE TRADITIONALLY POOR AREA OF GUNUNG KIDUL IN THE SPECIAL DISTRICT OF YOGYAKARTA IT HAS BEEN REPORTED THAT DOLOG IS DISTRIBUTING 1,200 TONS OF RICE.

6. IN NUSATENGGERA BARAT:

--THE BUPATI OF CENTRAL LOMBOK HAS ASKED THE NTB GOVERNOR FOR FOOD TO FEED 85,000 WHO LACK SUFFICIENT FOOD. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, 369 TONS OF RICE ARE AVAILABLE TO DOLOG TO OVERCOME CURRENT PROBLEMS. THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO PROMISED 500 TONS OF RICE, OF WHICH 150 HAVE BEEN DELIVERED.

7. PRESS COVERAGE OF CONDITIONS IN NUSATENGGERA TIMUR AND TIMTIM HAS BEEN MINIMAL, AND NO CONSULAR OFFICER HAS VISITED THESE AREAS DURING THIS DRY SEASON.

8. THERE IS NO CONSENSUS AMONG INDONESIANS AS TO WHETHER THERE IS INDEED A SERIOUS FOOD PROBLEM HERE. GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS GENERALLY SEEM TO DISCOUNT THE IDEA OF AN ACTUAL FOOD CRISIS. DURING A RECENT CALL, THE DIRECTOR OF THE EAST JAVE BRANCH OF THE BANK OF INDONESIA,

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 EB-08 TRSE-00 OMB-01 AGRE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06

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FM AMCONSUL SURABAYA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1148

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMCONSUL MEDAN

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RONY SUJANTO, TOLD ME THAT EAST JAVA HAS NO SHORTAGE ON A PROVINCE-WIDE BASIS SINCE THERE ARE NOW ENOUGH FOOD-STOCKS ON HAND TO FEED THE POPULATION UNTIL NEXT JUNE. OPINION IS THAT BY IMPORTING AND THROUGH DISTRIBUTION OF CURRENT STOCKS, "MINUS AREAS" CAN BE SUPPLIED BY MEANS OF PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS OR FREE DISTRIBUTION PROGRAMS. AN INTERNAL DEBATE ON THE PROBLEM 034 8 5 , HOWEVER, SURABAYA'S AID AREA COORDINATOR FOUND ON RECENT TRIPS TO LOMBOK THAT THERE IS NO AGREEMENT BETWEEN GOVERNMENT SOCIAL AGENCIES AS TO WHETHER IN FACT A FOOD CRISIS EXISTS THERE. ONE PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIAL STATED THAT BASED ON WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION CRITERIA, 6-7 PERCENT OF CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 5 YEARS ARE SUFFERING FROM EXTREME MALNUTRITION AND THAT A CRASH PROGRAM WOULD BE NEEDED FROM DECEMBER THROUGH FEBRUARY TO KEEP THE SITUATION FROM BECOMING FAR WORSE. A PUBLIC WORKS OFFICIAL, ON THE OTHER HAND, ASSERTED THAT NO FAMINE EXISTS IN LOMBOK, AND THAT LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS FOR THEIR OWN POLITICAL PURPOSES EXAGGERATE STATISTICS TO PRESENT THE SITUATION AS WORSE THAN IT IS. WHAT POLITICAL PURPOSES ARE BEING SERVED WAS NOT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SPELLED OUT. ANOTHER OPINION HEARD IS THAT DRY SEASONS ARE NOW IMPACTING MORE PROFOUNDLY ON RURAL AREAS BECAUSE OF MISMANAGEMENT OF IRRIGATION SYSTEMS AND EROSION OF SOIL BY OVER-HARVESTING FORESTRY TRACTS. ONE COMMENTATOR OBSERVED THAT RIVERS THAT USED TO ALWAYS CONTAIN SOME WATER, EVEN IN THE DRY SEASON, ARE NOW ONLY SAND DITCHES FOR HALF THE YEAR. ALONG THE SEAM LINES HAS BEEN THE SUGGESTION THAT ASSISTANCE FUNDS AND BIMAS LOANS TO FARMERS HAVE BEEN MISAPPROPRIATED AND THAT THE AGRICULTURE PROBLEM

IS A MATTER FOR ADMIRAL SUDOMO'S OPSTIB FORCES TO LOOK INTO.

9. CLEARLY THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH FOOD TO MAINTAIN MINIMAL LEVELS OF NUTRITION. EVEN WHEN HARVESTS DO NOT FAIL, IT IS POSSIBLE TO SAY THAT MANY OF THE RURAL POOR SUBSIST ON A marginally ADEQUATE DIET AND REPRESENT PERPETUALLY UNDERFED PEOPLE. AN INCREMENTAL SHORTAGE OF FOOD PUTS PRESSURE ON THAT SEGMENT OF THE POPULATION, PARTICULARLY IN AREAS OF THE COUNTRY LIKE LOMBOK AND THE SOUTHERN RIM OF JAVA, WHICH ARE FAR FROM GOVERNMENT CENTERS AND RICE STORAGE AREAS. OTHER FACTORS CAN BE SAID TO BE THE FAILURE OF ADEQUATE FOOD PLANNING AND PRODUCTION PROGRAMS. EVEN THOUGH INDONESIA HAS INCREASED RICE PRODUCTION DURING THE TWO FIVE-YEAR PLANS, THIS INCREASE HAS NOT KEPT UP WITH INCREASES IN CONSUMPTION AND POPULATION GROWTH. IT SEEMS FAIR TO SAY THAT THE CAUSE OF THE CURRENT FOOD DIFFICULTY OR PURCHASING POWER PROBLEM IS A COMBINATION OF NATURAL MISFORTUNES -- LACK OF RAIN-FALL, PESTS, AND FAILED HARVESTS -- AND VARIOUS DEVELOPMENTAL PRIORITIES TO WHICH THE GOVERNMENT HAS COMMITTED ITSELF. BECAUSE OF THE NON-AVAILABILITY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN CENTRAL AND EAST JAVE AND LOMBOK WHEN THE RURAL MASSES ARE UNABLE TO PRODUCE THEIR OWN FOOD BECAUSE OF A SHORTAGE OF WATER, THERE IS VERY LITTLE ELSE FOR THEM TO DO TO ACQUIRE MONEY FOR FOOD. IN PLACES LIKE THE KULON PROGO, BANTUL AND GUNUNG KIDUL AREAS OF DAERAH ISTIMEWA YOGYAKARTA, THERE IS NO INDUSTRY OUTSIDE THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR. INDONESIA'S DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES HAVE RESULTED IN CAPITAL INTENSIVE INDUSTRIES THAT PRODUCE FEW JOBS. ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT DISCUSSES THE NEED FOR LABOR INTENSIVE INDUSTRY, THE LAST 20 NEW INVESTMENT PROJECTS IN EAST JAVA, FOR EXAMPLE, HAVE ONLY RESULTED IN 5,500 NEW JOBS.

10. COMMENT: THE VIEW FROM HERE IS THAT THERE IS ENOUGH FOOD IN THE STOREHOUSES AND IMPORT PIPELINES TO KEEP PEOPLE FROM STARVATION UNTIL THE NEXT HARVEST. THE SHORT-TERM PROBLEM FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT IS ESTABLISHING ADEQUATE DISTRIBUTION NETWORKS TO THOSE REMOTE AREAS THAT SEEM TO BE IN THE MOST DIFFICULTY. THE LONG TERM CHALLENGE IS TO ESTABLISH SOURCES OF INCOME FOR THE RURAL MASSES WHO ARE IN A POSITION OF HAVING NO MEANS OF PURCHASING FOOD WHEN THEIR OWN FIELDS ARE NOT PRODUCING IN PERIODS OF DROUGHT. END COMMENT. SHERRY

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## Message Attributes

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